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Hebrew and English Responses and Hymns for Use in the Synagogue.
Collected by Rev. Dr. STRAUSS. (Bradford : 1891.)

THIS volume contains thirty-six musical settings, in excellent type, to various congregational phrases and hymns. Many of them are well-known as being in use in most of the synagogues in England and on the Continent. A few of them are old melodies, such as the Yigdal belonging to the Sephardic Jews ; others are taken from recent compilations. The novel feature of this collection is, that it includes English verses under such headings as "The Opening Year," "Yom Kippur," "The Way to Peace," "The Law of God," "Charity," "Universal Love," "Springtide," etc. This last-named is set to a well-known tune from the *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. Other musical selections from that splendid collection are also introduced. The conception of this publication is essentially good, as congregational singing has not hitherto been cultivated in reformed synagogues. It may be regretted that the authorship of the particular verses which are not part of the Hebrew liturgy is concealed, and it is a disadvantage that the composers' names have not been appended to the musical renderings. A more careful revision of the musical arrangements would have been satisfactory. Crotchets are sometimes confused with quavers. This, however, may be a misprint. The perfect model for hymn-books (we do not refer to the literary, but only to the musical department) is the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* ; and it would be well if more slender productions were constructed in a like fashion. This is distinctly a fresh step in a right direction, so far as concerns the popularising of congregational singing.

O. J. SIMON.

Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages.

By the late Dr. W. WRIGHT. (Cambridge, 1890.)

STUDENTS of the Semitic languages may congratulate themselves upon the assistance which will be given to them in their studies by the publication of the lectures of the late Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge ; and although many of the results were well known to German students, most of them were scattered in articles published in the various learned journals, and were not so easily accessible as they will be now. I think that it may be safely said that for the study of Semitic philology the work will be indispensable.

One of the most interesting inquiries in ethnology is as to the

original seat of any of the races into which humanity is divided. What was the primitive seat of the Semites? Dr. Wright reviews the various theories which have been suggested, but finally adopts the views of Schrader that it is to be found in Arabia. There is no doubt that regarding the question from the philological point of view, grammatical forms are more fully developed in Arabic than in the other Semitic languages, and thus the claim of Arabia may be considered established; but then we are met by the difficulty that the fuller forms may either have been new developments in Arabic and unknown to the original Semitic stock, or may have phonetically decayed in Hebrew or Aramaic. Is, for instance, the distinction made in Arabic between the conjunctive and the consecutive Vav original to the Semitic languages or not? Are case-endings as vocal terminations to nouns original to the Semitic languages or not? Some of the questions are very confusing; for instance, we find the definite *Hal* in Arabic and Hebrew, but we have no trace of it in Aramaic or Ge'ez. Which group of the Semitic languages, then, is the earlier, the northern or the southern? I think that it is best, with Noeldeke, to express no final opinion as to the primitive seat of the Semites. He says, "It is by no means always the case that a language is most faithfully preserved in the country where it originated." And he also points out the curious fact that the knowledge of so simple a word as "man" in one Semitic language will give no clue to it in another. The student of Hebrew would be surprised to find that to express "man" in Arabic we use the root-letters R, G, L; to express it in Ge'ez or Æthiopic we use B Ṣ S.

Wright discusses the connection which exists between the Semitic and the Aryan languages, and rightly says that much that has been written on this subject is utterly worthless. In this matter surely the dictum of Max Müller "that sound etymology has nothing to do with sound," seems to hold good. It is sheer folly, as Wright says, to find a connection between the Hebrew בָּנָה, "to build" and the Latin *pono*, or the Hebrew בָּעַר and the Greek *πῦρ*. Noeldeke gives the following illustration to show how easily one may be deceived by isolated instances. *Six* is in Hebrew *shesh*, almost exactly like the Sanscrit *shash*, but the Indo-European root is *sweks*, or perhaps *ksweks*, whereas the Semitic root is *shidth*. Consequently the resemblance is a purely accidental one produced by phonetic change.

We are pleased to find at page 73 a table of the permutations which occur in the various letters of the Semitic alphabet, as they are met with in the different Semitic languages. It takes the place of Grimm's law for the Aryan languages, and the fact that such a law exists in the Semitic languages is the best proof that the comparative

grammar of these languages is beginning to be treated as a science. It might, perhaps, be urged that it is not of much importance whether שבת, "to rest," is connected originally with the Arabic *Thabata* or *Sabata*, but such an investigation might give us some hints as to the origin of the Sabbath. Is the derivation given in Genesis of שָׁבַת a fanciful one? Has שָׁבַת anything really to do with a verb "to rest," or is the verb denominative?

There is no doubt that the scientific method of teaching languages is much easier and much more interesting for the student than the unscientific. It is not a waste of time to tell the student that, for instance, the Hebrew ח is the representative of more than one letter, that, therefore, חלל, "to profane," has nothing to do with חלל, "to bore a hole"; that מלח, "a sailor," is not connected with מלח, "salt"; and that פתוח, "an engraving," is not connected with פתוח, "open." It is not uninteresting for the student to be told that the curious form יוכל, as the imperfect of יכל, "to be able," is not necessarily to be considered a Hophal, and that it may be a true imperfect Qal, and yet it is only by comparative philology that such truths can be brought home to him.

I am quite willing to admit that a Hebrew scholar may enjoy the Psalms in the original without troubling himself very much about the roots of words, and the changes they undergo in the various languages, but surely it is not an unimportant question in Biblical criticism whether originally in the Semitic languages there was one form for the third person singular, masculine and feminine; or whether the confusion in the Pentateuch arises, as Kuenen suggests, from the common writing of הוּא for both.

One little point at once suggests itself. If the lectures were intended with special reference to the examination for the Semitic Languages Tripos at Cambridge, the examination must insist upon a knowledge of the elementary grammar of all the Semitic languages. The book cannot possibly be read by one who is acquainted with Hebrew alone. I notice, in several instances, that even words in the difficult Æthiopic syllabary are not transliterated.

There is an excellent table of contents, which almost supplies the place of an index, though the latter would considerably enhance the value of a very useful work.

L. M. SIMMONS.